



BELONGING UPDATE

JULY 2023

Dean of Students, Liz Kenny

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.
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**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

INTRODUCTION FROM LIZ KENNY

This update follows on from one sent in February 2023. Its content has been created by many colleagues across the Academy, and I thank them for sharing information and images.

Looking for summer listening? Click [here](#) to check out the dramatic life story and compelling music of Academy alumnus, Edmund T Jenkins in this BBC documentary which has been made by another former student, Allyson Devenish, which follows on from the Academy's own Bicentenary podcast series, 'Short Stories: 200 Years of the Royal Academy of Music'.

THE MUSEUM AND COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Head of Collections, Susana Caldeira



Children and families from Corpus Christi Catholic School, Brixton, paying the Museum a visit in June. *Photo Credit: Charlotte Levy*

The team in the Museum and Collections Department have been continuing to give digital and on-site access to the Academy's collections, as well as offering instrument loans to students and staff.

The department has been working with people from all over the Academy to interpret our collections from diverse points of view. The exhibits in the Lionel Tertis Memorial case, right at the centre of the Academy, matched by our online 'object of the month', celebrated Women's international Day, Black History Month, International Yoga Day as well as the LGBTQ+ month.

Equally the museum has been hosting lecture recitals organised by our students and research staff. In October we will celebrate Black History Month with a programme curated by Zara Williams, an Academy student and Gallery Assistant.

Our on-site public interaction has been tailored to the needs of our visitors, with our Gallery Assistants and the Museum Engagement Coordinator (also Academy students) providing careful attention to groups and individuals. It is our aim in the coming year to install digital labels and iPad screens in the Piano Gallery with different layers of information and object demonstrations to make our collection as inclusive as possible.

CURRICULUM

Dean of Students Liz Kenny, and Head of Postgraduate Programmes, Neil Heyde

The last issue enabled us to dive into the curriculum from the point of view of Academic Studies. For Principal Study and Departmental work, many students report there are different levels of knowledge among the teaching body, while several professors report that they welcome the opportunity to engage in depth with works they didn't know before, either in lessons or in chamber music, when students propose them.

We continue to listen and to engage: some students would prefer more compulsory repertoire, but the balance so far is towards an expectation that we encourage research skills and support the importance of diverse repertoire choices. Good examples of this, as well as the increasingly varied offerings at Final Recitals, are the Seen and Heard Festival – which this month featured its usual eclectic range from Florence Price to Kinan Azmeh – and the Students Create Festival in January.



Neil Heyde reports:

“In the postgraduate student meetings held as part of the Programme Review, postgraduate students and staff were strongly supportive of the principle that there should not be formal institutional assessment ‘requirements’ in this area, because the kinds of requirements that might be considered would potentially need to be very different across the wide-ranging cohort. They articulated very clearly that this was something that needed to be ‘owned’ by individuals, but also that institutional support is critical. We have some new institutional strategies in hand for enhancing the programming with some of the large projects and will be tracking some of the successful ground-level strategies in departmental planning documents. We will share these in the programme’s Annual Monitoring Report (2023-24)”.

We have two leading researchers, Dr Uchenna Ngwe (Academic Studies Lecturer) and violist Clifton Harrison in our community, who possess extremely useful expertise and knowledge. Clifton has worked with our librarians on repertoire lists especially in smaller scale chamber music, and Uchenna has been consulting on bringing more diverse voices to the Trinity College London graded examinations in woodwind. Our Governor Alexis Ffrench is working on this too, in his capacity as Artistic Director of the ABRSM. You can find a lot of fascinating ideas and resources on Uchenna’s freely available research portal, [here](#).

The Library and Concerts Departments are always happy to order new music for our collection and hear new ideas and thoughts. [Library | Royal Academy of Music \(ram.ac.uk\)](http://Library | Royal Academy of Music (ram.ac.uk))

STUDENTS' UNION

We owe a big debt of thanks to the Students' Union and especially its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Melissa Doody, who has filled the role for three years now, and will be a tough act to follow. Thank you, Melissa! Good luck to our new President Tiffany Qiu and thank you to our first ever President from Musical Theatre, Shona Masson. The student voice continues to be of enormous importance, with Departmental representatives building more connections across the student body and providing opportunities for musical and cultural collaboration. [RAMpage](#) goes from strength to strength, with students continuing to raise important issues and tell great stories with both words and music.

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

The Widening Participation Department is led by Claire Cooke, with Nicola Tagoe, Evidence, Evaluation and Planning Coordinator and Aysia Edwards, Your Academy Assistant. For a small department they have a big impact, with an ever-growing list of teachers from our staff as well as freelancers. The Department offers paid opportunities to students interested in developing skills in leadership and teaching, with a wide range of participants from ages 4 to pre-college. Email participation@ram.ac.uk to get involved.



Children from St John's Catholic Primary School in the Rotherhithe community on the First String Experience. *Photo Credit: Belinda Lawley*

By the time the Widening Participation Department has finished its summer programmes, in a month or so, they will have engaged with over 800 young people. The range of projects has grown and now includes the Community First String Experience in two partner schools, the ever-popular Composers', Jazz and Percussion Clubs, and audition-tailored experiences in Mentor and Audition Clubs. St Mark's Sundays and Beyond the Dots develop improvisation and ensemble skills for teenagers, and the Music Theory Grade 5 Rubicon is crossed in a creative way through the summer programmes Springboard, and Inner Ear, offering a deeper understanding of musical language.

WHAT DO THESE PROGRAMMES ACHIEVE?

By using the programme title 'Your Academy', Widening Participation welcomes every young person into the Academy community, encouraging them to return for further skill development. Belonging to the Academy community from the very first interaction means that, with the right dedication and support, they have the chance to progress through our various programmes.

This year, four young people applied to Junior Academy from Your Academy. Of those three received places. Out of twenty further applicants from Jazz Club, four entered the highly competitive Junior Jazz programme. One young person entered Primary Academy and one was awarded a place on our BMus course.

For our Junior Academy Musical Theatre programme, we took a different approach: out of 20 applications garnered through workshops led by Grainne Renihan, Deborah Stinton and our charismatic Musical Theatre graduates, 15 bursary-supported offers were made to join the programme. Seven offers were made from auditions, and eight students were offered a place through a 'Golden Ticket' at their state school workshop. We have confidence that at the end of the programme's two years, we will see students from all entry points flourish and achieve their potential.

The team is making a real difference. Find out more by emailing:
participation@ram.ac.uk

'The Academy cares for young musicians from all levels of skill in their instruments and offers opportunities for kids from lower-income families, from the global majority and from under-represented groups.'

– Student Assistant/Workshop Leader, Inner Ear Summer Programme 2022

NEXT TIME

In our next issue I'll get back to how Open Academy is making a difference to communities and to our students. These two departments are the foundation stones of all our work in this area, and more students are getting the chance to enjoy the rewards of this creative work, and how to fold it into satisfying careers where creativity, musical skill and social change connect. Much of this work is funded by the philanthropic community, who are actively engaged in working towards greater equity and change in music, and we're grateful to them.



Students taking part in Percussion Club at St Marks. *Photo Credit: Becca Hunt*

GET INVOLVED

It starts with students. I am always happy to hear your ideas, and help you progress them.

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